

MINUTES

**McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission
One Civic Center
1st Floor Community Development Conference Room
7447 E. Indian School Road
Scottsdale, Arizona 85251
Thursday, January 6, 2005**

CALL TO ORDER

Chair DeCabooter called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m., noting the presence of a quorum. He thanked the Commissioners for their service in 2004 and wished them a happy New Year.

ATTENDANCE

Present: Art DeCabooter, Chairman
Carla
Denny Carr
Erik Filsinger
Howard Myers
Arnold Roy
Don Ruff
Solange Whitehead (joined the meeting at 5:20 pm)

Absent: Christine Kovach, Vice-Chair
Virginia Korte
Laura Fisher

Staff: Bob Cafarella
Claire Miller
Don Meserve
Scott Hamilton

Others attending all or a portion of the meeting:

Dan Gruber, Steward

FUTURE EXECUTIVE SESSION

COMMISSIONER RUFF MOVED AND COMMISSIONER MEYERS SECONDED A MOTION TO HOLD AN EXECUTIVE SESSION FOR FEBRUARY 2, 2005, FOR THE PURPOSE OF DISCUSSION WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PUBLIC BODY

AND CONSULTATION WITH CITY ATTORNEY FOR LEGAL ADVICE TO CONSIDER ITS POSITION AND INSTRUCT ITS REPRESENTATIVES REGARDING NEGOTIATING FOR PURCHASE OR LEASE OF REAL PROPERTY FOR INCLUSION IN THE MCDOWELL SONORAN PRESERVE. THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY BY A VOTE OF SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0).

DISCUSSION: PICNIC AREAS IN ACCESS AREAS

Mr. Cafarella provided some background information and asked for input from the Commissioners on this item. He referred to a handout with pros and cons. Discussion ensued. Commissioner Ruff observed that an important consideration would be parking capacity problems. Commissioner Roy noted that a “no picnicking” policy would have to have some method for enforcement. Commissioner Carla added barbecue fires and disruption of wildlife to the “con” list. Commissioner Myers spoke in opposition to picnic areas, commenting that there are ample picnic areas in parks throughout the valley and that the preserve should be distinguished as a preserve, not a park.

Discussion followed as to different access areas. Mr. Cafarella stated that staff might return to the Commission for discussion relative to the Gateway. He observed that the Gateway might be the one location where picnicking would be appropriate due to the size of the area.

DISCUSSION: DESIGN OF NON-PRESERVE IMPROVEMENTS IN THE PLANNED PRESERVE BOUNDARY

Commissioner Myers stated that he had requested this agenda item, and had prepared a draft of “Guidelines for Facilities in the Preserve.” He distributed copies to the Commissioners. After discussion, it was the consensus of the Commission that a written policy would be prudent. Commissioner Carla suggested sending the draft to the Legal Department for review. Chair DeCabooter directed the Planning Committee to continue evaluate the guidelines, and bring a recommendation back to the Commission.

UPDATE: STATUS OF STATE LAND REFORM

Commissioner Carla reported that the next month would be critical. She explained that at the last session the original reform package failed because it was too big and rural issues too contentious. She stated that two slimmed down versions had evolved, one tentatively by Representative O’Halloran, and one by Senator Jeff Flake. She indicated that the next month should tell the story as to which version will be successful. Commissioner Carla stated that the city’s lobbyist Steve Olsen has been very helpful in promoting Representative O’Halloran’s version of Reform Light.

Commissioner Roy inquired as to the APS substation status. Commissioner Carla replied that subsequent to the APS presentation to the Commission, Mayor Manross stepped up and sent a comprehensive letter to APS, backed up by a letter from city staff questioning the proposals made by APS. She stated that APS met with Mayor Manross and staff and acknowledged the city's concern. They agreed to look at installing the twenty-acre station at the existing facility. Commissioner Carla added that, if the twenty-acre station remains at the existing facility, an additional 69 KV line parallel to the existing line on the Preserve would most likely be necessary.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT.

Mr. Cafarella referred to a memo from Kevin Sonoda regarding an update on the fire radio site at Pima & Jomax water operations. He requested E-mail comments from the Commissioners, which he would forward to Mr. Sonoda. Chair DeCabooter asked to include this item on the agenda for the next meeting. Mr. Cafarella went on to announce an Open House on January 27 at Mountainside Middle School from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm on the conceptual plan for Lost Dog Wash access area. Mr. Cafarella noted that the February 2, 2005 meeting would be a joint meeting with the Parks Commission to review the Conceptual Plan for the Lost Dog Wash Access Area. He added that there have been a number of changes already, many of which came from a meeting with equestrian users.

Mr. Cafarella stated that there is still no date for the official opening of Sunrise Trail, as much work remains to be done. He reported that wall construction is ongoing, and that there would be "no parking" signs placed on Via Linda.

PRESERVE MANAGER'S REPORT

Ms. Miller provided sample signs for the Commissioners, noting that approximately forty signs would be placed in the Preserve. She distributed copies of the final Sunrise Trail map, pointing out that additional information would be included on the back. She explained that many of the future maps would have this same format. Ms. Miller stated that Windgate Trail construction Notice to Proceed was scheduled for January 17. She concluded by commenting that there were a lot of activities to keep the stewards busy at both Wingate and Sunrise.

Mr. Cafarella added that revegetation on 128th Street to repair the existing scar was planned.

Commissioner Carr asked about efforts to minimize the visual impact of the Sunrise Trail. Mr. Hamilton replied that the rain has prompted the growth of a lot of groundcover and that the improvement is apparent.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS AND PUBLIC COMMENTS

Commissioner Carla noted that the Commissioners would be receiving an invitation to the 2005 Preservation party. She requested that the Commission consider moving the April meeting from first to the second Thursday, the 14th of April to avoid a conflict with the Preservation event. Commissioner Carla also distributed a booklet produced by the Scottsdale Convention and Visitors Bureau, and noted that effort had been made to include elements focusing on protection of the Preserve.

AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Commissioner Carr requested an in-depth session with giant maps of the entire Preserve for a more comprehensive overview. He pointed out that he was especially interested in seeing connectivity links. Commissioner Carla observed that any potential changes to the trail system would have to go through a public process once again.

Chair DeCabooter congratulated Commissioner Carla on having been named as a 2005 History Makers Person. He added that she would be so honored at a dinner on May 5, 2005.

ADJOURNMENT

Being duly moved and seconded, the regular meeting was adjourned at 5:45 p.m., with Executive Session to follow.

Respectfully submitted,

“For the Record” Reporters